

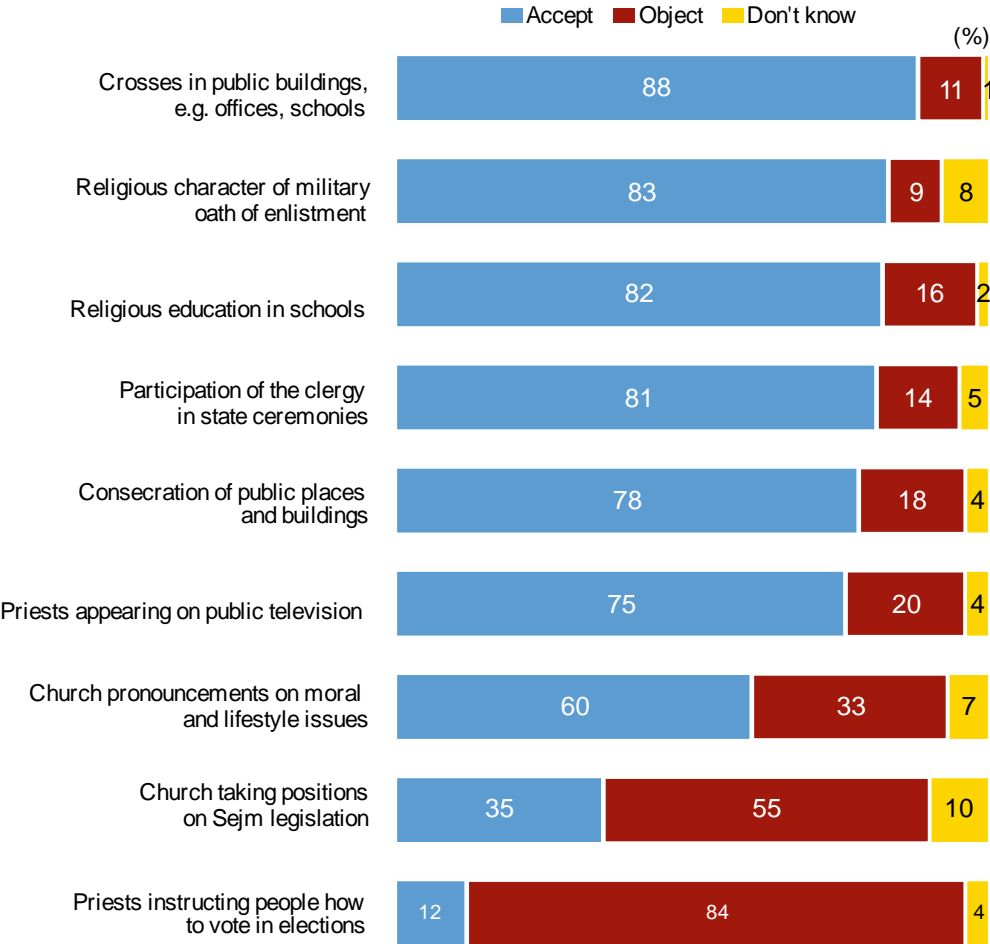
Relations between the Church and the state

Polish society is quite homogeneous in terms of religion. Roman Catholics constitute its vast majority and Catholicism has been an element of national identity since the partition. The state recognizes the special role of Catholicism in Polish culture and history. According to the Constitution, the relations between the Polish state and the Catholic Church are regulated by the Concordat. The agreement with the Holy See includes the recognition of the legal status of the Catholic Church, grants the possibility to enter into a religious marriage with civil consequences, guarantees the organization of religious education in schools and kindergartens according to parents' wishes and gives the Church the right to found and run educational establishments at all levels. According to the Concordat, the state creates conditions for religious practice in penitentiary institutions, care centres, welfare centres, healthcare facilities and in the military. According to the Concordat, the Church has the right to own its own mass media and air programmes on public radio and television. This model of Church-state relations assumes mutual autonomy, independence and cooperation and is usually called coordinated or friendly separation.

The presence of the Church and religious symbols in the public sphere usually does not raise objections. Most respondents do not mind crosses in public buildings, religious education

in schools and religious character of the oath of enlistment in the armed forces. They do not object to participation of the clergy in state ceremonies, consecration of public locations and institutions or priests appearing on public television. Crosses and priests are a part of the Polish cultural landscape.

Do you accept the following situations?



As far as Church pronouncements on moral and lifestyle issues are concerned, the majority do not object to them, but a third do not approve. The majority do not accept Church taking positions on legislation voted in the Sejm. This concerns in particular situations when priests instruct the citizens how to vote in elections. Such cases offend even the most religious people, i.e. those who attend religious service several times a week.

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Render unto Caesar... Church-state relations", April 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: March 2015, N=1062. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.